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Beatus Rhenanus, Tertullian and the Reformation: A Humanist's Critique of Scholasticism

John F. D'Amico

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Beatus Rhenanus, Tertullian and the Reformation: A Humanist's Critique of Scholasticism*

By John F. D'Amico

The early Church Fathers constituted an important element in the editorial work of Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547).¹ While his contribution to classical and historical scholarship has been generally appreciated, his work on the Fathers has not received close attention.² However, it is in this material that his own theological views become clear. His study of the Fathers resulted from his contact with some of the most important thinkers and intellectual centers of Northern humanism. His appreciation of the Fathers began in his student days at the University of Paris under Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1503–1507) and matured

* Part of the research for this study was done with a fellowship from the Newberry Library, Chicago and completed while the author was a NEH fellow at the Villa I Tatti, Florence. The author wishes to thank Prof. Paul Grendler and Mr. Alfred Marion, Jr. for their helpful comments.

1. Beatus' first biography by Johann Sturm can be found in the *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, eds. A. Horowitz and K. Hartfelder (Leipzig, 1886) (herein cited *Briefwechsel*), p. 1–11. See also Adelbert Horowitz: "Beatus Rhenanus: Ein biographischer Versuch," *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna), Philosophisch-historischen Classe, 70 (1872), pp. 189–244; idem: "Des Beatus Rhenanus literarische Thätigkeit in den Jahren 1508–1531," *ibid.*, 70 (1872), pp. 662–672; Gustav Knod: *Aus der Bibliothek des Beatus Rhenanus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Humanismus* (Leipzig, 1889); P. Adam: *L'humanisme à Sélestat* (Sélestat, 1962), pp. 51–67; and the forthcoming, John F. D'Amico: "Beatus Rhenanus and Italian Humanism," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*.

2. For Beatus as an editor and historian, see Paul Joachimsen: *Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtsschreibung in Deutschland unter dem Einfluss der Humanismus* (Leipzig, 1910; rpt. 1968), pp. 127–137, and Brigitte Ristow-Steighahn: "Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Beatus Rhenanus," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 95 (1973), pp. 362–380; I have not seen Christian Wilsdorf: "Beatus Rhenanus et la manuscrit du Chroniqueur de Colmar," *Annuaire de Colmar*, 11 (1961), pp. 37–41 or G. v. d. Gönna: "Beatus Rhenanus und die editio princeps des Velleius Paterculus," *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, N. F., 3 (1977), pp. 231–242. See also Henri Meylan: "Beatus Rhenanus et la propagande des écrits lutériens en 1519," in his *D'Erasmus à Theodore Bèze* (Geneva, 1976), pp. 39–45, at p. 40; *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen (herein cited as *Allen*) vol. 6 (1926), pp. 16–17; Walter Allen, Jr.: "Beatus Rhenanus, Editor of Tacitus and Livy," *Speculum*, 12 (1937), pp. 382–385; Pierre Petitmengin: "Comment étudier l'activité d'Erasmus des textes antiques," in *Colloquia Erasmiانا Turonensis*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1972), pp. 217–222, who at p. 220 announces his forthcoming study, "Erasmus, Beatus Rhenanus et Sigismond Gelen, éditeurs des textes antiques." See below note 21.

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